

REMARKS

The Applicant appreciates the thorough review of the application by the Examiner. Reconsideration and allowance are requested.

No new matter has been added by the amendments. No new issues are raised by the amendments.

Claim 40 has been amended by adding the subject matter of claim 39 as suggested by the Examining Attorney. Claim 40 is allowable.

Claim 42 has been cancelled without prejudice.

No new matter has been added by the amendments.

Claims 39 and 41 are patentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Welsch et al (U.S. Patent 3,358,950) in view of Forrester (U.S. Patent 5,620,058) and further in view of Ridgeway Jr. (U.S. Patent 4,180,867).

Claim 39 describes a rapid deployment system comprising an aircraft, at least one inflatable landing tube coupled to the aircraft, the at least one landing tube comprising an inner surface, an outer surface, a top end and an open bottom end, an inflatable exit slide positioned at the open bottom end of the landing tube, an air source connected to the landing tube and the exit slide for inflating the landing tube and the slide to an optimum pressure, and plural connectors positioned on the landing tube for coupling the landing tube to the aircraft, at least one entry port leading into the landing tube, and plural flexible retarders extending inward from the inner surface of the landing tube for retarding gravitational descent of cargo and personnel from the aircraft, further comprising slide smocks for covering the cargo and the personnel to reduce possibility of snags during descent.

There is nothing in any of the three references that would have suggested combination to a reasonable person of skill in the art at the time the invention was made. Neither Welsch nor Forrester would suggest combination with Ridgeway.

Ridgeway teaches an article of clothing, a bag or a tent with a drawstring gathering means. Figure 1 of Ridgeway shows a hole 14 that serves as the neck hole of a garment. (See, for example the neck hole 14 in Figures 7 and 8). Nothing in Ridgeway would have suggested use with a slide in either Welsch or Forrester. Ridgeway merely teaches an article of clothing, bag or tent for use primarily as camping equipment.

In fact, the disclosure of Ridgeway teaches away from combination with Welsch and Forrester. Ridgeway could not be used effectively with a slide. The preferred embodiments of Ridgeway are intended to be lightweight camping gear. (See, for example, column 1, lines 43 - 47). Nothing in Ridgeway mentions slide smocks or reinforced materials intended to contain goods during slides.

How or why Ridgeway, even as a sleeping bag or duffle bag, would go into the chutes of Welsch or Forrester would not have been obvious at the time of the invention. Ridgeway is classified with clothing in Class 2. It would have been an impossible stretch for one of ordinary skill in the art of evacuation systems at the time of the invention to envision combination of the Welsch or Forrester inventions with the clothing of Ridgeway.

Therefore, claim 39 is patentable over the combination of references.

Claim 41 adds to patentable claim 39 the additional patentable features that the slide smocks are of friction reducing material removable as desired. The fact that Ridgeway is used as a rain poncho does not entail friction reducing materials. Water proofing a material is distinct from friction reducing material. In order to make a water proof coating, the material may be

closely woven or treated with a water repellent chemical. Ridgeway makes no mention of friction reducing coatings.

Therefore, claims 39 and 41 are patentable over Welsch in view of Forrester and further in view of Ridgeway.

Claims 44 - 47 are patentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Welsch et al. (U.S. Patent 3,358,950) in view of Forrester (U.S. Patent 5,620,058) and further in view of Leisman et al. (U.S. Patent 4,681,186).

Claim 44 describes a rapid deployment system comprising an aircraft, at least one inflatable landing tube coupled to the aircraft, the at least one landing tube comprising an inner surface, an outer surface, a top end and an open bottom end, an inflatable exit slide positioned at the open bottom end of the landing tube, an air source connected to the landing tube and the exit slide for inflating the landing tube and the slide to an optimum pressure, and plural connectors positioned on the landing tube for coupling the landing tube to the aircraft, at least one entry port leading into the landing tube, and plural flexible retarders extending inward from the inner surface of the landing tube for retarding gravitational descent of cargo and personnel from the aircraft, further comprising a shield on the landing tube.

Leisman teaches a tubular escape device with at least one zipper for entry and exit from the chute. The chute has a friction creating material that extends through the chute for retarding descent speeds.

Leisman does not teach a separate shield around the outer surface of the landing tube. Leisman does describe a two-part tube construction, but the outer tube of Leisman is merely made out of a reinforced material. No shield is intended as found in the Applicant's invention.

Claim 44 teaches a shielding to protect cargo and personnel during descent into dangerous conditions. Leisman merely uses a reinforced material to retain structural coherence during operation. Leisman never uses the reinforced material for shielding and it is unlikely that the outer tube would provide the functionality as described in claim 44 without expressly intent. The outer tube of Leisman provides support and structure to the inner tube, not shielding for cargo and personnel.

There would have been no motivation to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the teachings of Welsch and Forrester with the outer tube of Leisman. Neither Welsch nor Forrester have a need for a dual tube construction similar to that of Leisman. Leisman describes alternative escape means, similar to Welsch and Forrester, as being deficient for allowing simple exit on a variety of levels. (See, for example, column 1, lines 56 - 62). Leisman teaches away from Welsch and Forrester by teaching zippered exit points along the longitudinal length of a double walled chute. There would have been no motivation to combine the references as suggested by the Examiner.

Therefore, claim 44 is patentable over the cited references.

Claim 45 adds to the patentable features of claim 44 that the shield is a Kevlar shield. Claim 46 adds to the patentable features of claim 45 that the Kevlar shield is an exterior armor on a front portion of landing tube. Claim 47 adds to the patentable features of claim 45 that the Kevlar shield is an exterior armor surrounding the landing tube.

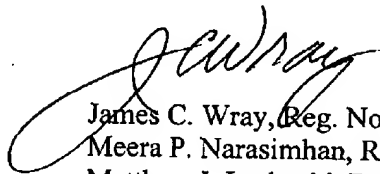
These features would not have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention. There would be no motivation to combine the references.

Therefore, claims 44 - 47 are patentable over Welsch in view of Forrester and further in view of Leisman.

CONCLUSION

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Respectfully,



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